

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OPR-02

IO-10 /079 W

----- 089294

R 031232Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 878

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 111

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: PROVISIONAL IRA FIRES SHOT ACROSS THE BOWS

REF: (A) BELFAST 91 (B) BELFAST 88

1. PROVISIONAL IRA CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR BELFAST CITY CENTER BOMBING MID-AFTERNOON APRIL 2. BOMB PLACED IN NEWLY RENOVATED TRAVEL AGENCY ABOUT ONE HUNDRED YARDS FROM MUCH-BLASTED EUROPA HOTEL. EXPLOSION AND FIRE GUTTED ENTIRE BUILDING. PROVISIONAL STATEMENT DESCRIBED ATTACK AS WARNING AND ACCUSED ARMY OF HARASSMENT VIOLATING TRUCE. BELFAST BRIGADE PROVISIONALS GAVE EXAMPLES OF VIOLATIONS AS STILL-UNEXPLAINED SHOOTING TWO PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN MEN (REF A) AND ARMY SEARCH OF HOUSE LOWER FALLS APRIL 1. PRESS QUOTES SECSTATE REES AS MAKING FIRST KNOWN DIRECT PUBLIC REFUTATION OF PROVISIONAL USE OF TERM "TRUCE" IN A STATEMENT EVENING APRIL 2. REES SAID LEVEL ACTIVITIES PART SECURITY FORCES RELATED TO LEVEL OF ANY ACTIVITY THAT MIGHT OCCUR AND THAT "THERE IS NO QUESTION OF A TRUCE. THIS IS A CEASEFIRE BY THE PROVISIONAL IRA." ASSOCIATED STORMONT STATEMENT NOTED SEARCH OF HOUSE WAS RESULT INFORMATION RECEIVED AND THAT SECURITY FORCES

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CONTINUING INVESTIGATE LAND MINE EXPLOSION DIRECTED AT ULSTER

DEFENSE REGIMENT PATROL SOUTH ARMAGH MARCH 14.

2. SEAMUS LOUGHRAN PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN ORGANIZER IN RADIO INTERVIEW MARCH 3 PROFESSED BE UNINFORMED OF PROVISIONAL IRA MOTIVES IN INTERRUPTING CEASEFIRE. HE SPECULATED IT WAS IN NATURE OF A WARNING "SHOT ACROSS THE BOWS" OF BRITISH ARMY. HE EXPRESSED BELIEF INCIDENT CENTERS INEFFECTUAL IN THIS SITUATION AND FACE TO FACE DISCUSSIONS NOW NECESSARY. IN ANOTHER EVENT, PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN NEWRY HAS CLOSED ITS INCIDENT CENTER IN PROTEST OVER ARREST NEWRY MAN AND HIS ALLEGED SUBSEQUENT MISTREATMENT BY ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARLY SPECIAL BRANCH OFFICERS.

3. M.P. GERRY FITT LEADER SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) REACTED STRONGLY TO BOMBING STATING FLATLY THAT PROVISIONAL IRA WOULD RECEIVED NO RPT NO SUPPORT FROM ANY QUARTER FOR RESUMPTION HOSTILITIES. SOME LOYALIST POLITICIANS CALLED ON GOVERNMENT SUSPEND PROGRAM OF RELEASES DETAINEES.

4. COMMENT: BOMBING MOST PROBABLY INTENDED AS REMINDER RATHER THAN OPENING BLAST IN RENEWED CAMPAIGN. SELECTION OF UNIMPORTANT BUT HIGHLY VISIBLE TARGET ON MAIN BELFAST ARTERY INDICATES EFFORT ACHIEVE MAXIMUM PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT. PROVISIONALS UNDOUBTEDLY DIVIDED INTERNALLY ON TACTICS AND NEWRY ACTIVITIES PROBABLY REFLECT STRAINS ON ORGANIZATIONAL DISCIPLINE. THERE ALSO HINTS THAT PROVISIONALS HAVE AGREED TO EXCURSION IN PROVIDING "PROTECTION" TO IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY AGAINST OFFICIAL IRA ATTACKS (BELFAST 109). HOWEVER CONVICTION GROWING BELFAST THAT PRESENT STRATEGY PROVISIONALS IS TO MAINTAIN CEASEFIRE THROUGH CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS. PROVISIONALS EXPECT CONVENTION RESULTS WILL DEMONSTRATE CONCLUSIVELY TO MINORITY NORTHERN IRELAND THEIR INABILITY ACHIEVE SATISFACTORY PARTNERSHIP THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. THEY EXPECT ALSO ANCILLARY RESULTS "FAILURE" CONVENTION WILL INCLUDE ADVERSE EFFECT ON BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION AND DISCREDITING OF SDLP.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, LIMITATIONS OF HOSTILITIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, EXPLOSIONS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BELFAS00111
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750116-0242
From: BELFAST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750487/aaaadbac.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BELFAST 91, 75 BELFAST 88
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUN 2003 by BrownAM>; APPROVED <12 JAN 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROVISIONAL IRA FIRES SHOT ACROSS THE BOWS
TAGS: PINT, UK, IRA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006